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## NOTES AND MEMORANDA.

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### THE END OF MUNICIPAL STREET RAILWAYS IN DETROIT.

As was anticipated in the last issue of this Journal,\* the Michigan Supreme Court on July 5 declared invalid the act permitting the city of Detroit to own and operate street railways. Subsequently the attempt to create a so-called municipal commission to take over the roads, and operate them in trust for the city until a constitutional amendment should be passed, came to grief, the proposition being too absurd to merit serious consideration from a legal point of view. Moreover, the feeling prevailed that the difference between the real value of the properties and the purchase price of \$17,500,000 left a very considerable margin of profit for the promoters of the scheme.

Meantime the street railway owners, who had reduced fares to three cents in order to influence the council and public sentiment, took revenge for failure by raising fares from the prevailing rate of six tickets for twenty-five cents to a straight five-cent fare, except on those lines where the charter calls for eight tickets for a quarter. This led to an attempt to reduce fares by ordinance, and to a restraining suit in the United States courts. The street railway question, while thus disposed of in one aspect, is not settled in others, and will remain an issue in future municipal elections and possibly in wider circles.

The municipal ownership question, however, is dead; and municipal railroading must receive its first trial in some State that has not had in the past such sad experiences with governmental industries as to provide against them in its organic law.

CHARLES MOORE.

\* See the note on this subject by the present writer in the issue for July, 1899, p. 453.

HEREAFTER the dates of issue for this Journal will be November, February, May, and August; and it will be the endeavor of the editors to bring the copies into the hands of readers promptly at the beginning of these months.

The amplified and annotated plan for the bibliography, which is adopted for the first time in this number, is not carried out as completely as the editors have desired; but it is hoped that with time and experience it will be got into better working order. Early notice, with all ascertainable bibliographical details, will continue to be given of new and forthcoming publications; and with this first notice, or in a subsequent issue when necessary, summary information will be furnished as to the character, contents, and authorship of books, as well as of periodical publications. Some errors and deficiencies are inevitable, but it is hoped that substantial aid will be afforded in following the growing and widely scattered literature of the subject.

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THE act establishing the United States Department of Labor provides, among other things, that the commissioner shall ascertain and report what articles are controlled by trusts or other combinations of capital, business operations, or labor, and what effect such combinations have on production and prices.

In conformity with this provision, Commissioner Wright of the Department of Labor has undertaken an investigation of the economic conditions surrounding industrial combinations. Professor J. W. Jenks, of Cornell University (who, it will be recalled, is serving as expert for the Industrial Commission on trusts and combinations), is co-operating with Commissioner Wright in this investigation. The inquiry is already under way, and with every prospect of success. Not only is the general public, whether opposed to combinations or in favor of them, desirous of securing the facts on the economic conditions before and after combinations have taken place, but the managers of great corporations are also to a large degree

favorable to the investigation, because they prefer to have future legislation based on facts rather than on assumptions.

The scope of the pending investigation is, in the main, economic: nevertheless, other aspects of the situation will also be covered. The chief inquiries relate to the wages formerly paid at any one time by the members of a combination, and the wages paid subsequent to the organization and at the present time; the prices of the products of the combination before and since organization and the cost of raw material; the number of middlemen before and since organization; the commissions paid at different times; the discounts allowed; the amount of output; the quality and character of output; the number of employees engaged formerly and at the present time; the plants which have been discontinued in order to perfect combination; the cost of the plants included, both active and suspended, as well as the cost of reproducing plants equal in capacity to the present active plants.

Inquiries are also made to ascertain the amount of active or working capital; the capital stock, with its various subdivisions into preferred, treasury, and common stock; the considerations for these issues,—whether property, service, money, franchise, good will, or other matters; the proportion of stock held by large and small stockholders; and all facts relative to bonds, including the total amount of bonds authorized, issued, paid off and outstanding, rates of interest, and the like.

The investigation will also seek to obtain a complete list of the individuals, firms, or corporations which united to form any particular organization; and it will seek to present as complete a list as possible of all trusts or combinations in existence at the present time, with mention of the States where incorporated.

The department undertakes this investigation in its usual careful manner, and with a view solely to the collection and presentation of pertinent facts. It will consider its returns entirely confidential, simply tabulating and presenting for public use the statistical results of the investigation. The investigation is probably one of the most difficult the department has ever undertaken; but the success attending other